



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

DIRK KEMPTHORNE – Governor
KARL B. KURTZ – Director

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
450 West State Street, 10th Floor
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0036
PHONE 208-334-5625
FAX 208-334-5926

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Tom Shanahan
(208) 334-0668

State Purchases Flu Vaccine; Recommends Vaccine for People Over 50

Nine thousand doses of flu vaccine are available for at-risk Idahoans at District Health Departments. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare purchased the vaccine and is partnering with the Idaho's Health Districts to administer it. The vaccine will be available to a broader group of Idahoans, including people over the age of 50 and close contacts of at-risk persons.

“We purchased the vaccine to increase the opportunity for at-risk Idahoans to get vaccinated” says Dr. Christine Hahn, Idaho State Epidemiologist. “We are starting to see increased flu activity in Idaho and around the country, and urge those at risk to get the shot.”

The vaccine is being distributed to health districts according to their population of people who are at-risk of complications from the flu. North Central District Health Department in Lewiston will receive 720 doses of flu vaccine, while Central District Health in Boise area will receive 2,000 doses. People can call their health district to schedule appointments, or find out when clinics are scheduled.

A shortage of flu vaccine developed in early October when one of the major flu vaccine suppliers experienced manufacturing problems and was unable to supply vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended the available vaccine be targeted for at-risk people who could suffer significant complications if they contracted the flu. The CDC recently expanded its recommendations for people who should receive the vaccine to protect themselves. The CDC and Idaho public health officials now recommend that the following people should be vaccinated:

(more)

- Adults 50 years and older;
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities;
- All children 6–23 months of age;
- People 2–64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions;
- All women who will be pregnant during the influenza season;
- Children aged 2–18 years on chronic aspirin therapy;
- Health-care workers involved in direct patient care; and
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children under 2 years of age and persons in high-risk groups.

Along with the state purchase of 9,000 doses, private healthcare providers, hospitals and long-term care facilities have ordered an additional 5,500 doses of vaccine for January delivery. Added together, almost 15,000 doses of flu vaccine are available in the state this month. “There is a large increase of vaccine available, so this is a great opportunity for people who are at risk,” Dr. Hahn says. “Flu season usually peaks in February, so there is still time for people to protect themselves.”

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Editors: For information on clinics that may be scheduled in your area, please contact the public information officer for your health district.

Panhandle Health District, Susan Cuff—415-5108

North Central District Health, Darce Vassar—799-3100

Southwest District Health, Laurie Boston—455-5325

Central District Health, Patti Murphy—327-8639

South Central District Health, Monie Smith—734-5900, ext. 278

Southeastern District Health, Mary Howell—239-5288

District 7 Health Department, Geri Rackow—522-0310, ext. 122